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## **State Auditor Tera Klutz refines initiatives, hires experienced executive team**

Ft. Wayne, IN – After taking office just a week after learning of her new role, Indiana Auditor of State Tera Klutz has established an experienced executive team and is refining her goals and initiatives for the remainder of the year.

“We have made great strides in implementing organizational changes and focusing on the key aspects of the Office these past several months,” Klutz said. “I have a strong and experienced team to work with, and I’ve identified key areas that I want to enhance in order to provide even more financial strength and transparency for citizens.”

On Jan. 2, Gov. Eric Holcomb announced Klutz as his appointment to become Indiana’s 57<sup>th</sup> Auditor of State to replace then-Auditor Suzanne Crouch, who was elected lieutenant governor. Klutz was sworn into office alongside the newly elected officeholders a week later on Jan. 9. As the state’s first Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to hold the position, Klutz has been impressed with the oversight and major initiatives the Office has undertaken to provide comprehensive financial transparency to the public.

“My predecessor developed an amazing tool for Hoosiers to utilize, and I plan to build upon her successes with our other state partners to make Indiana’s Transparency Portal the best one-stop shop for access to data about state government expenses and operations,” Klutz added.

In addition, Klutz is enhancing internal control functions within her office which will then be expanded to assist implementation of standardized accounting and control practices throughout state government.

While Indiana’s Transparency Portal receives high marks for making financial information readily available, Klutz said that implementing more technology means more focus on internal controls. She plans to implement an internal control function that can be adopted by state agencies.

“As a CPA, I understand the importance of internal controls and the risks involved with not having them. We have to be aware that using technology must not jeopardize internal controls. This is why developing an internal control training program across state government is important as we look to utilize technology to improve state processes.”

Indiana Senate President Pro Tem David Long (R-Fort Wayne) noted that Klutz is already making an impact for the state.

“Over the last decade, Indiana has built a national reputation for strong fiscal management and common-sense budgeting,” Long said. “Tera Klutz is doing an excellent job upholding these principles in her new role as State Auditor. Hoosiers are fortunate to have someone with such expertise and integrity serving in this important position.”

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Klutz also announced her executive team, saying she is excited to have attracted and held onto an experienced staff to support her initiatives and build upon the past achievements of the office.

Klutz's Deputy Auditor and Chief of Staff is Staci Schneider. Schneider comes to the Office with strong leadership experience after sixteen years in the Indiana Attorney General's Office as Chief of Staff, as well as Press Secretary and Communications Director to two former Attorneys General.

Courtney Everett is Deputy Auditor of Finance & Accounting. Everett was appointed Deputy Auditor in 2015. She has been with the State in various roles for nine years, most recently as the former Assistant Director for the State Budget Agency. Everett oversees statewide financial accounting and reporting and providing oversight for counties' property tax collections and distributions. She received her Bachelor's in Public Management from Indiana University in 2001.

Brent Plunkett is promoted from Director of Payroll to Deputy Auditor of Operations. Plunkett has more than 20 years of experience with the Auditor's office managing the state's payroll operations. With his promotion, he will continue to oversee the payroll function for the state's 30,000 employees, as well as the office's Information Technology department and data processing center.

In May, Kendra Leatherman and Molly Swigart join the Auditor's Office. Leatherman, who received her law degree from Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, will be the Legislative Director, having most recently served as a policy analyst for the Indiana Senate. Swigart joins the office as Communications Manager and Public Information Officer. Swigart most recently served in the Indiana Senate Majority Communications Office.

"While I have a strong management team, I also have a fantastic group of individuals in the Office who are very committed to doing things right and delivering excellent service," Klutz said. "It has been a fast and furious first few months, but I am fortunate to put my county auditor and CPA experience to work and stepping into my new role quickly. I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead to take Indiana to the next level."

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*Tera Klutz, CPA is the former Allen County Auditor, first elected in 2010 and re-elected to a second term in 2014. Prior to serving as Allen County Auditor, she served eight years as Allen County's Chief Deputy Auditor and three years working for a national public accounting firm.*